

crude oil and other commodities. The CFTC must be fully equipped and staffed so it can prevent the excessive speculation that drove oil prices to record highs last year and really hurt energy consumers. This funding is an important investment that will help us rebuild our economy on a stronger foundation.

In addition to these good programs, this bill also includes funding for a number of important Nevada projects. We have funding for the Nevada Arid Rangelands Initiative, Mormon cricket control, and noxious weed control. We have assistance for the Wildfire Support Group in Orovada to help them do fuels management. And we have funding for the University of Nevada Reno for their work with the Food and Agriculture Policy Research Institute, which does great research to help us understand what is going on in American agriculture so we can create good programs to help our farmers.

This bill makes a number of important investments. So I am very pleased that this bill has passed the Senate with broad support—76 Senators voting to send this conference report to the President.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I wish to commemorate and celebrate the 50th anniversary of the St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church.

For more than a century, a proud and vibrant Greek community has thrived in Nevada. 50 years ago, the parish of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church was established in Las Vegas, NV, to serve this dynamic community.

For half of a century, the parishioners at St. John the Baptist have celebrated their Hellenic heritage through cultural and spiritual events, all while giving back to the Las Vegas community through service. As one example of the many ways parishioners have inspired southern Nevada, the Panagia chapter of the Ladies Philoptochos Society meets monthly to serve the parish and the community by working in a hands-on fashion to serve the liturgical, charitable, educational, youth, and crisis needs of the community.

Las Vegas is profoundly enriched by the St. John the Baptist Greek Church. Every year, the church holds a Greek Festival, where Nevadans of all backgrounds listen to Greek music, eat Greek food, and embrace the spirit of kefi—a passion for life that radiates from the parishioners at St. John the Baptist.

It is my honor to celebrate the “Golden Heritage” of this storied church on Friday, October 16, 2009. To my friends at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church: OPA! May you celebrate many more successful years.

REMEMBERING SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, with the passing of Senator Teddy Kennedy, Americans lost a champion, the Senate lost a living legend, and those of us who were fortunate to know him personally lost a friend and mentor.

My memories of Teddy Kennedy reach beyond our short time together in the Senate all the way back to my days as a kid when his brother Jack was running for President of the United States. My father was an early supporter of Jack's campaign and Teddy stayed at our house in Arizona while he was campaigning for his brother in the west. In those days, the west was not considered a plum campaign assignment so, naturally, as the youngest of his clan it fell to him. We had a full house at the time, with all of my brothers and sisters at home, so there wasn't even a bed for him to sleep on. So he slept on the floor and never uttered a word of complaint. My memories of him from that time reflect the same Teddy Kennedy everyone describes today. He was a kind man, dedicated to his brother and his family, and always patient with all of us kids and our questions.

In later years, Teddy continued to be a frequent visitor to New Mexico. When our family was in the midst of a campaign and needed that extra bit of star power, Teddy was there the one person who could ignite a crowd like no other. As Democrats, we loved having him in our State because he could always get a turnout. He had rallies with 10,000–12,000 people—huge crowds for New Mexico.

Teddy Kennedy loved New Mexico and New Mexicans. And New Mexicans loved Teddy right back. In most family living rooms, you can find two prominently displayed photographs. They include at least one of the Kennedys be it Jack, Bobby, or Teddy and at least one of the Pope. New Mexicans just have a very deep affection for the entire Kennedy family.

My father eventually served in Jack Kennedy's Cabinet as Interior Secretary. These days, he talks a lot about his time in JFK's administration. He says he is now the last of the generation. The last leaf on the tree from the Kennedy Cabinet. My father was greatly saddened by Senator Kennedy's passing.

Just about every piece of monumental legislation that has come out of this Senate over the past 50 years has had Teddy Kennedy's stamp on it somehow. Whether it was voting rights or education improvements or health care reform—the cause of Teddy's life—America owes a debt of gratitude to the senior senator from Massachusetts for his leadership and unwavering dedication to making our country a better place for all who call it home.

But the last chapter in Teddy's legacy remains incomplete. That chapter is health care reform, and it is our job

as Teddy's colleagues and friends to pick up where he left off and pass legislation that helps all Americans obtain affordable, quality health coverage. Teddy Kennedy dreamed of a day when decent, quality health care is a fundamental right and not just a privilege. We are once again at the edge of transformative change in our country. We have Teddy Kennedy to thank for getting us to this point. I look forward to joining my colleagues as we make Teddy's final dream a reality.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I rise to speak of the enormous contributions to this body and to our nation of our former colleague, the late senior Senator from Massachusetts, Ted Kennedy.

When I took the oath as a U.S. Senator on January 3, 2009, I have to confess to a fair amount of trepidation. Many great statesmen have served before me in this esteemed body. For a former mayor from a State so distant from Washington, DC, taking a seat among these American leaders was a little intimidating.

No sitting Senator was a larger giant than Ted Kennedy and he impacted my life long before I arrived here. As a boy born and raised in Anchorage, my parents spoke of the great pride in public service the Kennedy family inspired in our family and in our Nation. My father, the late Nick Begich, served for 2 years in the Congress with Senator Kennedy, before my dad's death in 1972.

In many ways, Alaska and Massachusetts can't be further apart. Alaska is just celebrating its 50th year of admission to the United States and is a vast land rich in natural resources and of conservative, independent-minded people. The Bay State was the site of one of America's first settlements more than four centuries ago, is well developed, and its residents decidedly more liberal.

Yet in the first week of April 1968, those differences faded when Senator Kennedy traveled to Sitka to deliver a speech to the Alaska Democratic State Convention. The days-old assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. still ached in the hearts of Americans. In a scratchy tape recording of his speech, Senator Kennedy calls on Americans to rise above the frustration and fury they felt and to rededicate ourselves to “wipe away cynicism and to introduce the understanding that we wish to see future generations exercise so they will not suffer as their mothers and fathers have suffered.”

The transcript of that speech shows that Alaska U.S. Senator Ernest Gruening and the gathered Alaskans rose to a standing ovation as Senator Kennedy concluded his inspirational remarks. Today, 41 years later, those words continue to serve as an inspiration to me.

Mr. President, I had the opportunity to meet Senator Kennedy only once, when he welcomed me as a Member of this body just a few months ago. The intimidation I felt as a new Senator melted in his warmth and graciousness.

It will be a moment I will remember for the rest of my life.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO SOUTHGATE'S VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I congratulate the members of the city of Southgate's Volunteer Fire Department. This year marks the department's centennial anniversary.

This year the city of Southgate's Volunteer Fire Department is celebrating 100 years of service to the Northern Kentucky area. Southgate is my hometown, and I know and appreciate the great lengths that the fire department goes to in order to keep its citizens safe. I want to honor every volunteer who, on a daily basis, risks his or her life to faithfully serve their neighbors.

Again, I congratulate the city of Southgate's Volunteer Fire Department on reaching their centennial milestone. I know that the volunteers' efforts are an inspiration to others in Kentucky and throughout the Nation.●

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF PINEY WOODS SCHOOL

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to congratulate the Piney Woods School in Piney Woods, MS on their 100th anniversary. The Piney Woods School was founded in 1909 by Dr. Laurence C. Jones to educate the head, heart, and hands of young people. This transformative educational model was first exhibited by teaching the children of poor sharecroppers to read. Today, the school serves as a home, and offers educational opportunities to students from 23 States and 7 foreign countries.

The Piney Woods School is one of only four historically African-American boarding schools left in the United States. Diligently preparing their students for institutions of higher learning, Piney Woods propels 98 percent of its graduates on to attend some of the best colleges and universities in the country. The school has been featured on "60 Minutes" and "U.S. News and World Report" for their commitment to educate our disadvantaged youth.

The Piney Woods School has also made a commitment to service and leadership in their community, State, and country. The school was the first high school in the Nation to incorporate an Americorps program into its curriculum. Each of the 50 members in the senior class at Piney Woods School serves in the role of a quarter-time Americorps volunteer. In this capacity, they are actively involved in providing service in disaster areas, building playgrounds in inner cities, creating after-school programs for youth in rural American communities, and providing online tutorial services for students.

I congratulate the Piney Woods School on 100 great years and commend

them on their educational successes and commitment to service. I am proud that the Piney Woods School is in my home State of Mississippi, and I wish them the best in the future.●

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ACT

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate the ACT organization, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary, this year. As many of our colleagues know, ACT is an independent, nonprofit group based in Iowa City that provides an array of testing, assessment, and research services in the areas of education and workforce development.

ACT was launched in 1959 as the American College Testing Program by a University of Iowa professor of education and colleagues from 16 Midwestern States. Their goal was to help college-bound students find a good match for their interests and aptitudes, and to help colleges and universities place students into appropriate freshman-level classes.

On November 7, 1959, about 75,000 students took the first ACT assessment. This year, nearly 1.5 million graduating seniors 45 percent of all high school graduates in the Nation took the ACT exam.

From its relatively humble beginnings a half century ago, ACT has grown into an enterprise with a global reach. In addition to its testing and assessment services, it has developed programs to prepare students for success in college. It has created the National Career Readiness Certificate, a tool that thousands of educators and employers nationwide use to confirm that individuals have essential core employability skills. In addition, ACT is one of several partners in a new Manufacturing Skills Certification System designed by the National Association of Manufacturers, the Nation's largest industrial trade organization.

In addition to its Iowa City headquarters, ACT has 12 field offices across the United States, as well as offices in Australia, Korea, China, Singapore, and Spain. It has a global workforce of nearly 1,500.

I salute all of the superb professionals at ACT, whose vision and hard work have built an organization respected worldwide for its innovation and excellence. And I wish them even greater success in their next half century.●

RECOGNIZING THE MUSCATINE HISTORY AND INDUSTRY CENTER

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate the Muscatine History & Industry Center for being selected to participate in the rigorous Museum Assessment Program sponsored by the American Association of Museums.

The entire Muscatine community takes great pride in the History and Industry Center's success in showcasing

the city's past role as "pearl button capital of the world," as well as the historic contributions of three local enterprises: Bandag, a half-century-old company specializing in silver tubes, mesh venting, and tire treads; HNI Corporation, the world's second largest manufacturer of office furniture and the nation's No. 1 maker of gas- and wood-burning fireplaces; and Stanley Consultants, a global provider of engineering, environmental, and construction services.

The Muscatine History and Industry Center is a relatively small museum, but it has a very big impact. Not only does it welcome many thousands of visitors annually, it reaches out to the community with a variety of programs and activities, and hosts daily visits by school groups—from prekindergarten through high school. Students and youth groups learn by interacting with the Center's artifacts and many hands-on activities.

As the center begins participation in the Museum Assessment Program, it looks forward to an extended period of self-examination and peer review designed to improve its operations and programming, and to identify current and future challenges.

I congratulate the Muscatine History and Industry Center for taking this giant step forward in its development as a museum. And I salute all the outstanding professionals and volunteers at the center whose vision and tireless efforts have made this institution such an important part of Muscatine's cultural life.●

RECOGNIZING THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate the University Museums at Iowa State University for earning formal accreditation by the American Association of Museums, an honor that is bestowed on fewer than 10 percent of museums across the United States.

As a proud alumnus of Iowa State, I know that the university community takes great pride in its diverse collection of museums, including the three museums that together make up University Museums at Iowa State University: the Brunnier Art Museum, the Art on Campus Collection, and the Farm House Museum.

The Brunnier is dedicated to the decorative arts, including works by Grant Wood and Louis Comfort Tiffany. The Art on Campus Collection consists of more than 2,000 works of public art located all across the campus in buildings, courtyards, open spaces, and offices. The Farm House Museum is a wonderful 19th century house and a National Historic Landmark, offering visitors a window into what life was like on campus in the university's earliest days, when most faculty members lived on the college grounds.

These collections and museums make a powerful contribution to the cultural